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June 21, 1988

AIR MAIL

Dr. Jean Ann Gilder
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Dear Dr. Gilder:

Thank you for your package of May 30th and the opportunity to review the typescripts by Harvey, Kay and Moulin. I do have some comments on each of them.

1) Dr. Kay's paper is just fine. She has a point; but there is not quite a total neglect in historical studies of the overlap of immunology with molecular biology: cf. in particular the work of Kenneth Schaffner, Pittsburgh.

I must admit that I am startled to confirm that Fruton does not refer to the immunochemical work of Kabat and Heidelberger and makes (only passing) reference to Landsteiner, page 125.

On page 2 of her typescript it should be Venn not Van diagrams.

2) Harvey. This is on the verge of being a very important paper. But she should clarify that she herself is dealing with at least two very different and orthogonal aspects of the neuro-immune relationship.

1. The physiological interrelationships of the neuro- and immune - systems. The early history she gives was interesting; the field of neuropsych-immunology has now become a cult of its own, with numerous (rather soft) publications - cf. the Institute for the Advancement of Health. But all that has very little to do with Edelman's effort.

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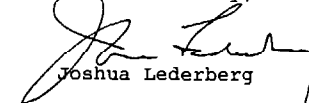
2. Basic mechanisms of specificity in the two systems. Yes, "selection" is treacherous. In introducing "instructive" vs "elective", Lederberg (Science 129: 1649 (1959) took pains to classify Darwinian selection as a subset of elective models.

3) Moulin. My own taste and preference is for works that have a higher proportion of hard historical analysis than "system talk" -- but that is perhaps idiosyncratic and Moulin does have some measure of the former. It is hard for me to extract what is her thesis, and how it could be falsified.

Some more detail: Doesn't Burnet refer to the "lymphoid system" in his book on clonal selection: Jerne introduced networks and that may be the complication that distinguishes "lymphoid system" from "immune system". But only a part of contemporary immunology concerns networks.

The term should be plasmacyte not plasmocyte.

Yours sincerely,



Joshua Lederberg